

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

Sacramento

LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA) PROGRAM

CRITERIA FOR PRESERVATION PROJECT GRANTS

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is a federal funding source available for grants to libraries to implement the *California Preservation Program* (1995) and to conduct preservation and conservation activities in accordance with provisions of the State Plan for LSTA in California. Consideration is also given to the contribution of a project to Library of California program goals.

For the purpose of the LSTA grant program in California, “library preservation grants” are defined as funds awarded to libraries for planning and implementation of projects that cover all elements of preservation and conservation of library materials. Funds are available for activities that will enhance access to library resources, safeguard rare or endangered treasures, improve library services, or promote resource-sharing among libraries. Collections of statewide or universal interest in contrast to those of purely local, limited interest to a narrow clientele are most competitive.

In preparing preservation grant applications it is important for the applicant to define a barrier to service or a service need associated with a target clientele. The needs assessment process should identify and characterize the target population, identify the barrier to access, and address how the preservation outcome will improve direct library service to that population. The library should be able to identify quantitative and qualitative measures that will help evaluate the project and demonstrate its effectiveness. Collections of statewide or universal interest in contrast to those of purely local, limited interest to a narrow clientele are most competitive.

Preservation projects for local collections will be evaluated competitively based on the significance of the materials to be preserved, quality of needs assessment, client group and purpose involved, barriers to access to the existing content, collaborative elements proposed, experience and qualifications of the applicant, and long-term viability.

For public libraries, projects to preserve local history collections must describe the statewide as well as local value and interest of the materials. Partnerships with other institutions are encouraged but a library must be the lead agency and receive the grant funds. In approved cases, library collections submitted for preservation grants may include archives.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Grant applications are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria (not in priority order):

1. Eligibility. Projects may be submitted by any library eligible for LSTA grants.
2. Qualified subject categories of materials. Applicants should furnish evidence of the relevance, significance, and enduring value of the collection to the state’s heritage or its pertinence to California historical, cultural, educational or economic vitality. Within that scope, projects may include all varieties of historical, social, and cultural materials in all

formats normally collected by libraries. Local library history collections may qualify for LSTA grants. In proposing such projects, applicants are advised to select target collections based on considerations of uniqueness, demand, combining of scattered materials, sharing of unique resources, and cost, as well as physical condition, need for wider access, and availability for resource sharing.

3. Description/Collection assessment. Applicants must describe the collection to be preserved and the methods and/or technology to be employed for conservation or preservation. Some key factors are uniqueness, size, and scope of the collection. Copyright and other rights management must be resolved. The applicant must note any conditions placed on availability of the material that would affect resource sharing. Restrictions may reduce the competitiveness of a proposal, and some limitations such as fees for access are impermissible for a grant.
4. Processing status. Applicants proposing projects that deal with unprocessed materials should clarify the present condition of the collection and indicate efforts made to obtain processing support from the parent organization or donor. Collections obtained or donated without processing funding are not favorably regarded for use of LSTA funding as a remedy. Efforts to exhaust other avenues for funding of processing prior to requesting LSTA should be indicated. Projects involving backlogs not previously dealt with by the applicant library because of low internal priority, lack of parent organization funding, or lack of demonstrated or acknowledged external value are much less competitive. Collaborative funding is strongly encouraged.
5. Purpose and activities. Proposals may address any of the eligible purposes, activities, and methods of LSTA, such as a demonstration. Types of projects encouraged are those that achieve a tangible result such as saving an eminent, endangered collection or making unquestionably valuable resources accessible to a broad user community. Other qualified projects are those that contribute to statewide preservation planning, administration, training, and cooperative endeavors such as a statewide preservation information center.
6. Formats. There are no restrictions prescribed for formats in the preservation objective of the LSTA program. The State Library may announce a special priority in a given year.
7. Treatment. Acceptable treatments in preservation projects range across a spectrum from "low-technology" to high technology. For traditional physical preservation, low-tech solutions such as microfilming, though not a high priority due to their limited accessibility, may be appropriate and will be considered in evaluating proposals. For digitization, state of the art technology and conformance with accepted or emerging standards are requisite to be competitive. As well, sustainability of both the digitized medium and the means of access to it are critical. Digitization is not necessarily a substitute for preservation and should not be undertaken for its own sake, unless the project aims to test a novel technology or mechanism. Use of digitization should be compared to other preservation technologies that might be appropriate or cost-effective prior to developing a proposal.
8. Project objectives. Preservation projects may meet one or a combination of objectives. Examples: physical preservation such as reformatting or special repair, conservation of rarities, creation of electronic content, digital conversion or capture of existing materials or content; bibliographic and intellectual access in conjunction with preservation (online cataloging/indexing/metadata/finding aid); dissemination and intellectual access (database, search engine, special Web page, CD-ROM, multimedia exhibit); and improved delivery

(transmission of faxed replicas or digital versions via the Internet). Projects reflective of an applicant's comprehensive strategic plan for conversion and preservation of, and bibliographic access to its collections, and the sharing of that plan with the State Library in the proposal are more competitive.

9. Access. Projects must assure wide access to the content of materials preserved, e.g. by load of catalog records in OCLC, finding aids in the Online Archive of California, etc. Public awareness and availability of the materials for resource sharing is mandatory to qualify for a grant.
10. Matching funds. Projects are required to present matching funds. Details are available from the State Library.
11. Applicant qualifications. Applicants must display in-house skills and capability to handle a project or willingness to acquire the expertise to perform competently.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES:

The following administrative considerations govern the evaluation of preservation grant projects by the State Library:

1. Multiple, similar preservation projects proposed in a given year from one institution are, as a group, much less competitive because of limited funding. Applicants must also consider their capability and capacity to staff and manage multiple projects simultaneously. An applicant seeking LSTA support for multiple objectives should identify its priorities.
2. Proposals from museums for museum activities are not eligible for LSTA, which is a library program. Museums having libraries may apply on their behalf for projects related to library materials, data records, and/or programs. Museums may apply in partnership with a library if the library is the lead applicant and the project pertains to library goals. There are also museum-related funding opportunities within agencies such as the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
3. Applicants whose projects are more suitable for state funding by the Library of California, California Library Services Act, the Civil Liberties program, the state-funded literacy programs, or other state-level opportunities will be referred to those sources as applicable.
4. Applicants for LSTA whose projects contain objectives that fall within another public or private extramural assistance program will be advised about re-structuring or re-directing their applications to avoid duplication. Examples of these are: National Endowment for the Humanities, National Historic Preservation and RCommission, IMLS National Leadership Grants and Native American Grants, and the U.S. Dept. of Education.
5. Projects which are an ongoing, routine local function or operational responsibility, such as rare book room maintenance, current cataloging, book repair, or binding, are not competitive.

6. High-cost projects require compelling justification of LSTA resources. Archives and manuscripts collections are labor intensive and their high unit costs must show a defensible use of public funds to be competitive.
7. LSTA will not be used to preserve or convert an entire library.
8. See the flier “Criteria for Eligibility to Receive Grant Funding” in the packet entitled “Guidelines for Developing LSTA Grant Proposals” for information on archives and historical societies in relation to LSTA projects.

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